

September 13, 1983, p. 3

I am very proud of this Tryon article. Lots of details, very readable, and it printed very well. The photograph reproduced beautifully. Bob Price will, I'm sure, be very pleased with this article on his grandfather.

Inside...

School sports
- pages 10-11
Local history
- page 14

Our 111th year of serving the Carbondale area -- home of Michael Hacken

Carbondale News

Vol. 111 No. 37

Wednesday, September 14, 1983

25¢

14 Carbondale (Pa.) News, Wednesday, September 14, 1983

Local history

George Tryon was prominent local building contractor after Civil War



George H. Tryon

By S. ROBERT POWELL

Until recently, very little was known about the life and career of one of the most widely known and respected building contractors in northeastern Pennsylvania during the final decades of the nineteenth century. George Hedding Tryon, who, in the fall of 1884, established himself permanently in Carbondale, where he lived and worked until his death twenty years later.

Since the publication of the article "Estabrook family traces roots in Carbondale to Civil War days" (NEWS, June 15, 1983, page 1), however, a large quantity of information has been learned about Tryon, who was the father-in-law of Charles Vivian Estabrook. This information has been learned primarily from Tryon's grandson, Robert F. Price, 169 Lincoln Avenue.

Tryon was the son of the Methodist minister, the Rev. Levi Dennis Tryon (1817-1876) and Priscilla Mead (1820-1892), both well known residents of Honesdale during their life times. Tryon was born at Auburn, N.Y., on November 26, 1845, and until 1884, resided at various times in Auburn, Bradford County, Honesdale, and other places.

During the years before the Civil War he lived in Honesdale, where, on August 10, 1862, he became a member, with the rank of corporal, of Captain James Mumford's Company G, 141st Infantry Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, which was assigned to the First Brigade, First Division, Third Corps, Army of the Potomac. At the time of his enlistment, Tryon was a mechanic. He served for three years, his regiment serving valorously. Among the battles in which he fought are Fredericksburg (December 13, 1862), Cedar, VA (May 2, 1863), and Chancellorsville (May 3, 1863). At the battle of Gettysburg, the 141st was decimated, with 27 killed, 103 wounded, and 21 missing during the rebel attack. Nineteen came out of the battle unscathed (3 commanding officers and 16 enlisted men). Tryon was among the wounded on July 2, and was carried off the field of battle by I.M.

Haycock. Owing to his wound, sustained in that portion of the Battle of Gettysburg that took place in the Peach Orchard there, he was transferred to the invalid corps, in which he served the remainder of his term. On July 21, 1865, after 36 months of service to the nation, and by authority from the War Department, he was discharged, at Chicago, Illinois, as a corporal of Captain I. H. Chapman's in the 59th Company, 2nd Batt., V.R. Corps. From Tryon's discharge papers, which are owned by Robert Price, we learn that at the time of his discharge, Tryon was 18 years old, 5 feet 6 and a quarter inches tall, with dark complexion, dark eyes and black hair. Tryon was mustered into the William H. Davies G.A.R. Post No. 187, Carbondale, on January 10, 1892, by transfer from G.A.R. Post No. 141.

Among the Civil War souvenirs that belonged to Tryon, and which are now owned by Robert Price, are Civil War buttons, several rounds of rifle ammunition (grape shot), a peach pit from the Peach Orchard battlefield, and shell fragments picked up on the battlefield at Gettysburg. Price, in addition, owns an extraordinary photograph of Company G, 141st Pennsylvania Infantry, that was probably taken in the Fredericksburg area during the spring of 1863. Price's grandfather, George Hedding Tryon, appears in the photograph.

Following his discharge from the Union Army, Tryon learned the carpenter's trade and gained a knowledge of the business of contracting and building, which he followed first in Wilkes-Barre, before he established himself in business in Carbondale in Gelder's Block on River Street (near Hornbeck's). He was a member of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Local Union No. 813.

Among the important building contracts which Tryon had may be mentioned those for the Bank (probably the three-story addition, now razed, to the 1873 Miners and Mechanics' Bank, now razed, on North Main Street), the Leader Building, and the Aitken Building. In 1892, he erected no less than five buildings in Carbondale (Carl Schroeder's three-story brick store, John Williams' stone and brick store, Dennis Finnigan's three-story hotel, John D. Nealon's dwelling, and a building for George Brandow), and made extensive repairs on the building of Thomas O'Connell.

In 1894, he executed Truman I. Lacey's design for the new interior and the new roof on the old City Hall (the two-story wing of present-day City Hall) and joined the two-story wing to the three-story wing and the tower of the present building, at a cost of \$3,500. Tryon was engaged to do this work by Lacey when the Binghamton contractor, W.D. Stevens, who erected the three-story wing and tower of City Hall, ceased work on his contract in the fall of 1893. It was Tryon and his workmen, in addition, who installed, at a cost of \$2,000, the four fireproof vaults that extend through both stories of the two-story wing of present-day City Hall. Tryon, who employed from 15 to 30 men during the busy season, erected, in addition, many family residences in Carbondale and vicinity, including the house now occupied by his youngest daughter, Doris I. (Tryon) Price, at 28 Dart Avenue.

In 1873, Tryon married Adelaide Hathaway (1856-1884), who bore him three children (Mary, Louise and Mead H.). In 1885, following his wife's untimely death, he married Mary Hathaway (1864-1945), his first wife's sister, by whom he had four children (Lois, Leon D., Ruth A. and Doris I.). Adelaide and Mary Hathaway were the daughters of Heman Philander Hathaway and his wife Priscilla.

During the summer of 1896, Tryon underwent an operation for the removal of a cartilaginous tumor on the jaw. This operation is described, as follows, in a newspaper clipping dated August 15, 1896: "Dr. W.J. Lowry assisted by Dr. J.S. Niles performed an unusual and delicate operation upon contractor G.H. Tryon yesterday by which it is hoped he will be given relief from the facial troubles with which he has long suffered."

"For nearly a year the muscles of Mr. Tryon's jaws have been so rigid that his mouth could be opened only wide enough to admit a spoon being inserted between the teeth. At the first appearance of the trouble little was thought about it. As it increased it caused him much trouble and inconvenience but he dreaded to have an operation performed. This was put off from time to time till it became absolutely imperative. Recently he has suffered terribly from ulcerated teeth and it was impossible to open his jaws far enough to permit of the teeth being extracted."

"Yesterday the surgeons made an incision extending along the left cheek. The muscles of the jaw were then separated. It was found that a cartilaginous tumor as large as a hen's egg had formed on the jaw and this was removed. All the teeth on the lower jaw were removed and the patient made as comfortable as possible. He will now have freer use of his jaw and unless complications set in will be greatly benefited by the operation."

Tryon recovered from the operation and continued to work in Carbondale as a contractor and builder for eight years. On Wednesday, June 15, 1904, at 7:45 a.m., at his residence at 28 Dart Avenue, George Hedding Tryon died. At the time of his death, he was actively engaged in building the R.M. Vannan Block (44 Lincoln Avenue). The following information about Tryon's final days is contained in his obituary that was published in a local paper (probably the Leader): "The deceased had been ailing since Christmas with liver trouble, but his condition had not been considered serious. He had received the contract for the erection of R.M. Vannan's new business block on Lincoln Avenue and had worked there until Thursday noon."

"When he went home to dinner he complained and in the afternoon was compelled to take to his bed. From then on he failed rapidly and during the last hours suffered considerably, although at all times he displayed patience and fortitude."

Funeral services were conducted at the Tryon home on Dart Avenue by the Rev. T.F. Hall, pastor of the Methodist Church. From the house, the funeral cortege proceeded to Maplewood Cemetery, where, at the interment of Tryon's earthly remains, the G.A.R. ritual was read by J.M. Alexander, commander of the William H. Davies Post No. 187.